

REMARKS

Claims 1-8 and 10-17 were examined. No claims are amended. Claims 1-8 and 10-17 remain in the Application.

The Patent Office rejects claims 2-3, 6-7 and 15-16 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as obvious over U.S. Patent Application No. 2001/0037821 of Staley (Staley). No other rejections are presented. However, Applicants assume that all claims are rejected and thus offers the following comments with regard to Staley.

Claims 1-3 relate to a method comprising removing a material from a surface of a wafer by chemical mechanical polishing the wafer with a slurry comprising an oxidation agent for the material and a buffer; and monitoring a signal representative of current required to rotate the wafer as a measure of a material removal endpoint. The buffer is present in the slurry in an amount sufficient to at least double a differential between a signal measured at a material removal start point and the material removal endpoint relative to a slurry without the buffer.

Staley teaches a multi-component polishing and/or cleaning composition wherein the components are mixed at the point-of-use or immediately before delivery to the point-of-use. Staley describes various components that may or may not be used in embodiments of the polishing and/or cleaning compositions. Those components include an abrasive, an oxidizing agent, a catalyst, a film forming agent, a complexing agent, a surfactant and a stabilizer. See page 2, paragraph 0013 through page 3, paragraph 0022.

Claims 1-3 are not anticipated (under 35 U.S.C. §102(e)) or rendered obvious by Staley, because Staley does not describe a method including removing material from a surface of a wafer by chemical mechanical polishing the wafer with a slurry comprising an oxidation agent and a buffer wherein the buffer is present in an amount sufficient to at least double a differential between a signal measured at a material removal start point and the material removal endpoint relative to a slurry without the buffer. In previous Office Actions, the Patent Office pointed to the complexing agents of Staley as inherently having properties of a buffer. Without conceding that such complexing agents have such property, Applicants fail to find any disclosure or motivation in Staley to use complexing agents in an amount to at least double a differential

between a signal measured at a material removal start point and the material removal endpoint relative to a slurry without the buffer. Simply saying that a component of a slurry is a buffer does not place that component in an amount sufficient to at least double a differential as described.

Claims 4-8 and 10-11 relate to a composition including a slurry, an oxidizing agent, an abrasive and a buffer. The buffer is present in an amount sufficient to at least double a differential between a signal measured at a material removal start point and the material removal endpoint relative to a slurry without the buffer. Applicants believe claims 4-8 and 10-11 are not anticipated or rendered obvious over Staley for the reasons stated above with respect to claims 1-3 that Staley does not teach a buffer present in such sufficient amount.

Claims 12-17 relate to a kit. The kit includes, among other things, a slurry, an oxidizing agent, an abrasive and a buffer in an amount sufficient to at least double a differential between a signal measured at a material removal start point and the material removal endpoint relative to a slurry without the buffer. As noted above with respect to claims 1-3, Staley does not teach or provide any motivation for a buffer in such sufficient amount. Accordingly, claims 12-17 are not anticipated or rendered obvious over Staley.

Applicants respectfully request that the Patent Office withdraw the rejection to claims 2-3, 6-7 and 15-16 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as obvious over Staley.

CONCLUSION

In view of the foregoing, it is believed that all claims now pending patentably define the subject invention over the prior art of record and are in condition for allowance and such action is earnestly solicited at the earliest possible date.

Respectfully submitted,

BLAKELY, SOKOLOFF, TAYLOR & ZAFMAN LLP

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William T. Babbitt
William Thomas Babbitt, Reg. No. 39,591

12400 Wilshire Boulevard
Seventh Floor
Los Angeles, California 90025
(310) 207-3800

I hereby certify that this correspondence is being deposited with the United States Postal Service on the date shown below with sufficient postage as first class mail in an envelope addressed to: Mail Stop RCE, Commissioner for Patents, P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria, VA 22313-1450.

Nedy Calderon 11/8/05
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